

Glastonbury Health Care Center

February 5, 2015

Written testimony of Elizabeth Schmeizl, Administrator, Glastonbury Health Care Center, Concerning

***Proposed H.B. No. 5586 AN ACT INCREASING NURSING FACILITY RATES.**

***Proposed H.B. No. 5812 AN ACT CONCERNING A COST OF LIVING INCREASE FOR NURSING FACILITIES.**

***Proposed S.B. No. 231 AN ACT CONCERNING COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES FOR NURSING HOMES.**

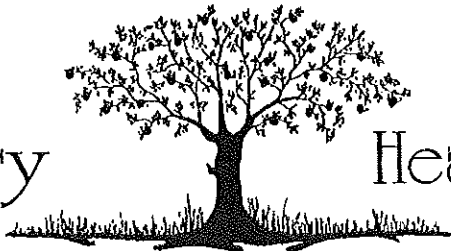
Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Abercombie and to the members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Elizabeth Schmeizl. I am the Administrator at Glastonbury Health Care Center in Glastonbury, CT. Glastonbury Health Care Center is a longstanding provider of nursing care in the community of Glastonbury with 105 skilled nursing beds and 241 employees. We are a Five Star facility with a superior reputation for care and have been a member of our community for more than 25 years. We are a recent Recipient of Recognition from the American Health Care Association for safely reducing the off label use of antipsychotics and we are a St. Francis Care Post-Acute Care Affiliated Network Provider.

First, I want to publicly thank the state legislators who introduced these badly needed bills—House Republican Leader Klarides, and Representatives Perillo and Gentile, and State Senator Crisco. And thank you also to the Human Services Committee for including these bills at this public hearing.

The bills all get to the same issue. Medicaid Nursing facility rates have been basically flat since 2007, but costs have been dramatically rising. The bills address the fundamental problem of the escalating cost of providing high quality health care by increasing payments based on a cost of living adjustment.

The message from the operator's point of view is simple—Our nursing facilities need your help. We just can't continue on a path where no help is provided without strapping our employees and jeopardizing quality.

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Here are some examples of what we are up against in our nursing facility while the rates have been stagnant:

- Increased patient acuity. Individuals who are relatively healthy are going directly home from the hospital. People who are very compromised with multiple co-morbidities are requiring skilled nursing care.
- New or updated regulatory guidelines regarding increased criminal record check guidelines that require that facilities make changes that have costs, but are not reimbursable.
- New or updated regulatory guidelines regarding digital information under HIPPA that require that facilities make changes that have costs, but are not reimbursable.
- Our long term care residents are aging in place and requiring much more care. The average age in my facility is 87 with four people over 100 years old.
- Costs for electricity, food, natural gas, encryption software, drugs and medical supplies have significantly increased.
- We are experiencing a greater challenge in collecting applied income from residents to pay for their care. This is due to the overall economy in Connecticut and the increasing shared dependence of families on an elderly person's social security and pension.

I am asking you to advance these bills and provide our nursing facilities the help they need to care for our residents.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.